

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15 and 21-25 are in the application.

Claims 1-15 and 21-25 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite with respect to use of the term “being effected”.

Claims 1-15 and 21-25 were also rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hasegawa Koji in view of Shinbara et al and Takano.

The rejection of claims 1-15 and 21-25 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, based on indefiniteness of the term “being effected” has been rendered moot with the cancellation of such term from all of the claims.

The rejection of claims 1-15 and 21-25 as being unpatentable over Hasegawa Koji in view of Shinbara et al and Takano is a reiteration of the rejection of claims 1-30 in the prior action to which applicant has responded.

In dismissing such response, the Examiner noted that applicant has provided arguments with respect to intended use but without structural limitations. Accordingly, with the above amendments, all the independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 21 have been amended to specify structural elements of an inert gas supply nozzle connected to an inert gas supply source through pipe elements having control valve elements and an organic solvent supply nozzle connected to an organic solvent supply source through pipe elements having control valve elements, with both supply nozzles being included in the second processing chamber.

Support for the amendments is in the drawings (e.g. Figure 1) as elements 36 (inert gas nozzles) and elements 38 (organic solvent supply nozzles) and associated specification text. Figure 4 shows organic solvent and inert gas supplies, with pipes 36a and 38a and valves 36b and 38b included in the second chamber 3.

Applicant accordingly, with the structural limitations in the claims, reiterates the arguments made on December 5, 2007 and with the RCE submission on February 5, 2008. Those submissions were made in response to the rejection of the claims 1-30 in the final rejection of September 5, 2007 and repeated in the present action with respect to claims 1-15 and 21-25.

Specifically, with respect to the above amendments and the inclusion of structural elements, the limitations of the, “...atmosphere within said second processing chamber being continuously replaced by an inert gas, with the dry process being effected by supplying a drying gas which is different from the inert gas...” have been structurally

replaced in the independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 21, with elements which provide inert gas to the second processing chamber and an organic solvent to the second processing chamber:

“...an inert gas supply nozzle included inside said second processing chamber, said inert gas supply nozzle connected to an inert gas supply source; an organic solvent supply nozzle included inside said second processing chamber, said organic solvent supply nozzle connected to an organic solvent supply source...”

The Examiner is requested to review the claims in light of the amendments to structure taking into account the arguments previously made

In addition, to the arguments made in the prior responses of December 5, 2007 and February 5, 2008 and reiterated herein, applicant submits that the second chamber has elements for the separate introduction of inert gas and organic solvent to prevent unnecessary oxide films and water marks on the surfaces of the substrates and also expeditiously dries the substrates. In addition, independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 21 all claim third opening and a third shutter member between the first processing chamber and the second processing chamber. This enables the prevention of the organic solvent generated in the second chamber from detrimentally entering the first chamber. None of the cited references disclose structural configuration of nozzle members to directly introduce inert gas and organic solvent into the second processing chamber. The Examiner has specifically noted that Koji, even when modified by Shinbara, fails to teach a continuous supply of inert gas. However, Takano, cited as teaching the continuous supply of inert gas, does not disclose direct introduction of an inert gas into a second processing chamber or the direct introduction of an organic solvent into a second processing chamber. The claims as amended are not disclosed, taught or even suggested by the cited references, whether alone or in combination and independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 21 are allowable over the cited prior art. Similarly dependent claims 2-5, 7-10, 12-15 and 22-25 are allowable for at least the reasons cited with respect to the independent claims.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application, allow the claims as amended and pass this case to issue.

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